

What Do the People of Florida Expect of Their State University?

The following letter from Prof. Karl Schmidt, formerly of the university of Florida, now living in New Hampshire, is a notable contribution to the discussion now in progress, of the expediency of re-electing Dr. Sledd as president of the university of Florida:

EDITOR DEMOCRAT:—I have just read an article from the Daily Sun, sent me by a friend in Gainesville, under the title, "Presidency of University," and the fairness of your statements reprinted in the article, impressed me. I am not informed about the details of the discussion that is going on concerning the State university, but you are right in urging that discussion of a successor to the present incumbent of the presidency of the university is altogether out of place and order so long as the question has not been settled whether the present president of the university of the State of Florida is the fitting man for the position or not; and this question should be answered clearly, specifically and fairly, "regardless of personal prejudice or preference."

The Gainesville Daily Sun presumes to state the general sentiment of the people of Gainesville and of the State in saying that Dr. Sledd "has signally failed to make of the university what was and is expected of it." It is a good thing to be frank with one's self and with others; let us then frankly decide what it is that the people of Florida expect of their State university. Do they want for their sons the best education obtainable under the existing conditions, or do they want for them merely a degree and the distinction that is associated with "going to college," irrespective of the quality of the work for which the degree stands? In the latter case it will be an easy matter to throng the "university" to get the "numbers" for which a good many Americans, not only in Florida, are mad. If, however, they want their State university to do real college work they must expect, for the present, a comparatively small number of students in the university.

It seems quite clear from the remarks of the Daily Sun (though it would be very illuminating if the Sun would frankly and openly say so), that it is expecting "numbers." If the people of the State agree with the Daily Sun, it is not Dr. Sledd they want for the presidency of the State university; then let them go back to the old order of things of about five years; let the grand fight that Dr. Sledd has been waging in the interest of true scholarship in Florida colleges be lost. What of it? If the people of Florida really want a public school with plenty of students to brag about, and want to still call it a "university," that is their affair. However, if the people realize (and I cannot but think that the majority of the people do realize) that a mere degree may be a good ornament for the title some of some rich people, but that it is worse than useless for those who have to earn their living by means of the knowledge and skill they receive at college, then they will support Dr. Sledd to the utmost of their ability, for he has been during these years the chief exponent of their cause.

The students in the university of

Florida are just now beginning to realize what true scholarship means. Amongst them are a number of most promising young men who will rank high in their professions. They are receiving as good a training as any but the largest colleges in the country can offer, due, I frankly think, to the incessant labor, the heart-breaking toil of one man whom I count it a great privilege to know—Dr. Andrew Sledd. I was associated with him for four years, and have been able to compare his work with that done in other colleges. He is a man of rare abilities and sterling character, a graduate of the best universities in the country, able to attract the best students as well as the best co-workers, which is, in my mind, the best and most important qualification of a college president, particularly in a State removed from the intellectual centers of the country and unable to offer the inducement of large salaries to its professors.

The trustees of the former university of Florida, the Board of Control of the present university of Florida, did signal service to their State in calling Dr. Sledd to reform the old and build the new into a State university that was worthy of the name. If the people of Florida want a sham and a degree and large numbers, then the Daily Sun is right and Dr. Sledd has "signally failed;" if they want the best State university possible under the existing conditions, he has made a genuine and substantial success.

What the State university needs is to be liberally supported by the State and—to be left alone. An educational institution is like any other plant: start it properly, keep away the weeds, water it, but—don't keep poking at it or pulling it to make it grow. The beautiful effect of a REAL college on the educational system of the whole State can hardly be overestimated. Witness the uplifting influence that Harvard, for instance, has had on the public schools of New England, and I dare say that the best principals in the State of Florida already feel the stimulating influence of the State university and are in hearty agreement with its ideals; but an institution which calls itself a "university" and is doing grammar and high school work, as the university of Florida did before Dr. Sledd took charge of it, is pernicious in its effect on the whole educated life of the State.

Let the people of Florida be patient; universities are not built in a few years, and to provide the buildings and equipment does not yet mean having made a college. We all should like to see the number of students doubled or trebled but this is impossible at present if the State university is to continue really doing college work. The thoughtful who study the conditions in the State know this, and Dr. Sledd has provided the public with exact information on the question. They want to leave the high school boys in the high schools, which need them for their own healthy growth and development, and do not want a State university to compete with them; and at the same time they want to provide those who have done the high school work with the higher education which it is the proper function of the State university to provide. Nothing could therefore be more misplaced and detrimental to the best educational interests of the State than to stir up feelings of dissatisfaction on the score of small numbers.

Yours very sincerely
KARL SCHMIDT,
Formerly Professor of Mathematics at the University of Florida.
Pequaket, New Hampshire, March 24, 1909.

WILLIAMS' KIDNEY PILLS.
Have you neglected your Kidneys? Have you overworked your nervous system and caused trouble with your kidneys and bladder? Have you pain in loins, side, back, groins and bladder? Have you a flabby appearance of the face, especially under the eyes? Too frequent a desire to pass urine? If so, Williams' Kidney Pills will cure you—at druggists, price 50c. Williams M'fg. Co., Props., Cleveland, O. Suwannee Drug Co.

Notice.
The city tax books are now open for assessing city taxes for 1909.
S. P. MAYS, City Tax Assessor.

Contractor C. W. Hughes is finishing a nice six-room residence for B. B. Hughes on Shelby street, in the northern part of the city. This is a very pretty home and is in a very desirable part of the city.

Baby won't suffer five minutes with croup if you apply Dr. Thomas' Eclectric Oil at once. It acts like magic.

BILL FOR GOOD ROADS

To Be Introduced at the Approaching Session of Florida Legislature.

The following bill, providing for a system of good roads for this State, has been prepared by the board of trade of Arcadia, in DeSoto county, and it will be introduced in the legislature next month:

An Act to be entitled an Act to encourage the construction of a system of good roads in the State of Florida, by paying a bonus to each county for each mile of hard surface road built and constructed by such county:

Section 1. That upon the passage and approval of this Act and its ratification by vote of a majority of the electors of the State of Florida, the Board of the Internal Improvement fund of the State of Florida shall have power and it is hereby directed to issue two million dollars in bonds in denomination of one thousand dollars each, or so much thereof as may be necessary from time to time to fulfill the requirements of this Act; said bonds to bear interest at the rate of 4 per cent per annum; said bonds to be sold and the proceeds thereof used in the creation and establishment of a system of good roads in the State of Florida and such other roads as are tributary thereto.

That the said Board of the Internal Improvement Fund is authorized to employ a State inspector of roads, whose duty it shall be to inspect all materials and pass upon their fitness for making good hard roads before construction is begun, and to inspect said roads upon completion and issue certificates to the Board of Internal Improvement Fund where roads are built according to specification, stating number of miles built, and upon such certificates the Board shall order the comptroller to pay to the county commissioners of each county for each mile of road so hard-surfaced that is part of the State system of good roads hereinafter outlined, \$500.00. And for each mile of hard-surfaced road built in each county that is part of a system of county roads and not part of the State system, \$250.00 per mile.

The specification for a hard road shall require that the material used shall be of marl or rock or such substance as shall harden when exposed to the atmosphere, due preference being given to local materials, and shall be laid fully ten feet wide, and when packed shall not be less than eight inches thick in the center and five inches thick at the edges, elevated in the center.

For the purpose of this Act the system of good roads shall consist of a road from Jacksonville to Pensacola; from Tampa to Plant City; Plant City to Lake City and Gainesville; Gainesville to Jacksonville via Palatka; Jacksonville to Miami via St. Augustine; Plant City to a point on the Jacksonville and Miami route, near New Smyrna in Volusia county via Lakeland and Orlando; Palatka via DeLand, intersecting road from New Smyrna to Orlando; Bartow Junction to Fort Myers via Bartow, Arcadia and Punta Gorda.

The routes shall be selected by the board of county commissioners of the counties through which the road passes, together with the road inspector or commissioner of that county, should there be one, and the State inspector, who shall decide upon the route through each county.

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